

c) REMARKS

The claims are 17-40, with claims 17 and 30 being independent claims. Claims 17 and 30 have been amended to more clearly define the present invention. Support for amended claims 17 and 30 may be found, inter alia, on page 17, lines 10-13; page 19, lines 6-13 and in Figs. 2A, 2B, 4, 10A and 10B.

Claims 17-25, 28 and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krasnov '762 in view of Gekat '181 and Fujimoto '523. Claims 26 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krasnov '762 in view of Gekat '181 and Fujimoto '523, further in view of Sander '087.

Claims 30-36, 39 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krasnov '762 in view of Gekat '181, Fujimoto '523 and Ando '805. Claims 37 and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krasnov '762 in view of Gekat '181, Ando '805 and Fujimoto '523, further in view of Sander '087. Applicants respectfully traverse the grounds of rejection.

Prior to addressing the merits of rejection, Applicants would like to briefly discuss some of the key features and advantages of the presently claimed invention. The excimer laser of the present invention has an arrangement in which there are two possible gas flow directions which can be made alternately in the gas supply path structure. The gas supply path structure is symmetric with respect to the throat portion as the center. The laser of the instant invention functions properly irrespective of the gas flow direction. In the claimed apparatus, the gas may be alternately supplied into the gas supply path structure in different directions. When gas flows in one direction, a first port acts as a first fluid inlet, and the second port acts as a first fluid outlet. Alternately, when gas flows in

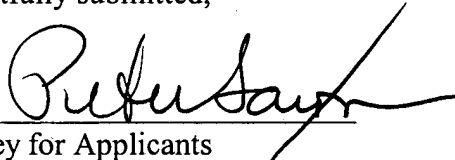
the other direction, the second port acts as a second fluid inlet, and the first port as a second fluid outlet.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the references, whether considered separately or in any combination, discloses or suggests the combination of elements now claimed in which gas can be alternately supplied in different directions in the gas supply structure in which first and second ports are symmetrically arranged with respect to the throat as the center. A prima facie case of obviousness, therefore, is not raised.

This amendment should be entered, since it places the case in allowable form. Wherefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the final rejection be withdrawn, the claims allowed and the subject application be passed to issue.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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